



Alptransit-portal.ch – gateway to the NRLA

September 2020 sees the opening of the Ceneri Base Tunnel, which will cut the journey time by rail from Milan to Zurich to around 3 hours. This marks the completion of the New Rail Link through the Alps or NRLA, the largest transport project Switzerland has seen for decades. Linking northern Europe with the south, it centres around three tunnels: the Ceneri, Lötschberg and Gotthard. The NRLA cost some 20 billion Swiss francs, and took around 20 years to build.

The website for Swiss transport history

The NRLA has a small digital counterpart: the website alptransit-portal.ch. Some 90 short chapters offer an insight into the planning and construction of the NRLA, presenting both milestones and the key figures involved, and set them in the context of Swiss and European rail and transport history from the 19th century to the present day, covering everything from **mules** to **high-speed trains through the Ceneri**. Each chapter features multiple media, with texts and archival materials, images, audio and film documents. One is devoted to the vision of the **Europe-Africa Express**, complete with shower, hairdresser and bar, another to the uncertain future of the famous **Gotthard mountain route**.



Thousands of historic documents online

The Swiss Federal Archives created the five-language portal in association with the Federal Office of Transport as well as historians, graphic designers, lawyers and editors. Various sources also come from SBB Historic, the archives of the SBB and its predecessors, and from Uri, Ticino and Zurich. The portal is a virtual archive, bringing together source materials that are physically located in a number of places.

It is aimed at members of the general public with an interest in transport history, the media, and historians. The various chapters are an opportunity for readers to gain a first-hand impression of the subject and explore the unique historic documents for themselves – a reminder that we create history through use: by looking, reading and reflecting.

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